

# **THE STAKES OF PEACE & WAR**

## **DIPLOMACY, ANTHROPOLOGY, CLIMATE AND CONFLICT**

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March 4-5, 2020

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Executive Summary



# THE STAKES OF PEACE & WAR

## DIPLOMACY, ANTHROPOLOGY, CLIMATE AND CONFLICT

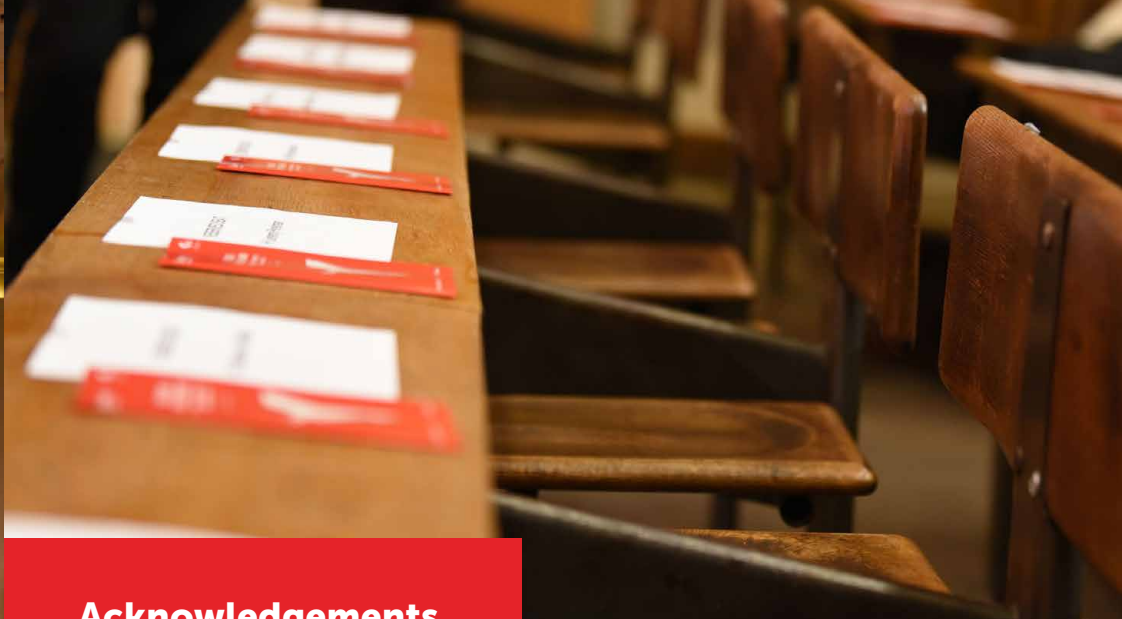
MARCH 4 - 5, 2020



### Executive Summary

From March 4-5, 2020, the Kuwait Program at Sciences Po hosted its third conference in collaboration with the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) at Sciences Po and Hotel de l'Industrie. This year's theme on The Stakes of Peace & War: Diplomacy, Anthropology, Climate and Conflict brought together specialists and practitioners from a range of different fields, including diplomats, academics, journalists and military in order to engage a multidisciplinary debate on global peace and security. Students and external conference participants were offered the chance to share their thoughts and engage on these issues with the experts through lengthy Q&A sessions.

A wide array of panelists enabled a comprehensive dialogue aimed at tackling today's conflicts through a collaborative approach, in order to bridge the understanding of past and emerging threats. Discussions highlighted the importance of international cooperation and solidarity to strengthen resilience and adaptability to current challenges, such as pandemics, climate change, and conflict. The jointly organised 2020 Sciences Po-KFAS Conference provided a forum for participants to debate on how to best foster peace, analyse stakes of diplomacy, anthropology and climate, discuss the influence of new technologies in conflict, and the role of empowering and reinforcing civil society.



## Acknowledgements

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We would also like to extend our appreciation and thanks to the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences for their long standing partnership with Sciences Po and their generous support, along with the participation of Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin, Director General, KFAS; Dr Amani Albedah, Deputy Director General for Support Programs and Functions, KFAS; KFAS Board Members, Dr Yousef Alebraheem and Mr Khaled Al Mashaan; Mr Yousef Al-Mazeedi, Program Manager, KFAS; Mrs Dalal Alhashash, Senior Program Officer, KFAS; and our 8 social science scholars in attendance from a range of higher education institutions in Kuwait.

Contents of this executive summary are the sole responsibility of Sciences Po, and do not necessarily reflect the views of KFAS.

A sincere word of appreciation goes to Dr Vanessa Scherrer, Dean Enrico Letta, Dr Stéphane Lacroix, Mrs Kate Vivian, Mr Etienne Cazin, Mr Fabien Albouy, Mrs Morgan Packer and KFAS for their intellectual contributions to the overall conference program design.

This conference would not have been possible without the support from an excellent team of Sciences Po Master’s students, our two Master of Ceremonies, Britta Gade and Ahmad Sayyar, and our conference assistants: Lina Tafur, Giulia Pasquali, Loulwa Murtada, Elio Azar, Mariam Nasser, Noemi Grütter and Abraham Collier. The executive summary was written by Michael Forte, Guido Lanfranchi, Omar Mansour, and Julia Skalova.





## Keynote Panel

# A HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH TO CONFLICT: FOCUSING ON GENDER AND PUBLIC HEALTH

### Keynote Speakers

**Sima Samar**, Afghan President Special Envoy, State Minister for Human Rights and International Relations, Afghanistan • former Deputy Chairperson of the Interim Administration of Afghanistan • former Minister of Women's Affairs, Afghanistan • former Chairperson of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) • former United Nations Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Sudan (2005-2009) • Founder of Shuhada

**Rony Brauman**, Former President of MSF 1982-1994, Director of the Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute (HCRI), University of Manchester

### Chair

**Jeremy Perelman**, Associate Professor, Director of Clinical Programs, Sciences Po Law School

The “Stakes of Peace & War” conference began with a dynamic discussion between Dr. Sima Samar, Afghan President Special Envoy, State Minister for Human Rights and International Relations, Afghanistan, and Dr. Brauman, Former President of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and Director of the Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute (HCRI) at the University of Manchester. Based on their rich experience in, respectively, human rights promotion and humanitarian action, they confronted their views on the interactions between human rights, transitional justice and women's empowerment in the context of conflicts. More specifically, the panel addressed the shortcomings of the recent US-Taliban 2020 Agreement and future challenges in Afghanistan.

Watch the keynote at [vimeo.com/395215978](https://vimeo.com/395215978)



### A human rights-based approach to conflict?

Dr. Samar stated that while human rights considerations are key to reaching sustainable peace, none of the agreements established to end the Afghan War have ever embraced a human rights-based approach. The US-Taliban 2020 Agreement is no exception, as it does not contain a single reference to them. Dr. Samar reminded the audience that everyone, wherever they live in the world, should be able to enjoy basic human rights – such as healthcare, education, peace, access to clean water and shelter – and that conflict begins when these rights are violated.

In contrast, Dr. Brauman defended that there is no such thing as a human rights approach to conflict. He has always been critical of those promoting human rights, as invoking them in a context of conflict has often been a means to impose one's own political order. In Afghanistan, women's rights were used to justify Western interventions for the wrong reasons. In general, Dr. Brauman expressed his disbelief in universal humanitarian values, as values themselves vary across cultures and therefore, it is impossible to construct a universal system.

Regarding humanitarian action, Dr. Brauman stated that Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) is able to provide healthcare in war-torn countries because they are useful to those in power – including in situations where international law is ignored. He also emphasized that MSF takes action only once it is convinced that it is preferable to inaction, and that its practitioners are trained to carefully adapt to local issues by assessing cultural sensitivities and their professional experience.



### People's need for justice

In the context of Afghanistan and its current conflict, the need for transnational justice and the role of transnational relationships to the peace process seek definition. Dr. Brauman argued that, while there is an incontestable need for justice, the implementation period varies and cannot be pre-defined. As illustrated in countries with a history of long periods of war, the moment when justice may actually be implemented varies greatly in terms of timing. In his experience, while humanitarian NGOs tend to impose their own pace and desire to enforce justice, justice may not be a first priority to develop following the end of conflict. However, this assessment largely depends on each society and culture. Dr Brauman added that justice results in various forms, one which can reach beyond dimensions of justice offered by courts and lawyers.

Dr. Samar added that justice is not only about punishment: as a healing mechanism, it is a basic human right in which the people need to be involved. As former head of the Human Rights Commission in Afghanistan, she consulted thousands of Afghans on issues of transitional justice. The aim was not to apply justice, as there are other institutions dedicated to this purpose, but to understand what the people wanted and promote their access to justice. Dr. Samar expressed her hope that the International Criminal Court (ICC) will be able to intervene in Afghanistan and elsewhere, as the legal system of countries embroiled in conflict can rarely be trusted. However, if war crimes and crimes against humanity are not properly addressed, they continue and fuel a culture of impunity.

### Enhancing women's agency in crisis and conflict

In regards to women's role in peace processes, Dr. Samar highlighted that women need to be involved not only in peace negotiations, but also be equally represented and present within all levels of hierarchy. The international community's promotion of women and their role in peace and security made a significant difference in Afghanistan, and created a platform in which women's participation could be openly discussed. According to Dr. Samar, women are some of the loudest advocates in Afghanistan regarding implementation of the rule of law, while still being faced with significant obstacles, such as the lack of female healthcare professionals or female teachers. Dr. Brauman asserted that women, just as men, should be involved in peace negotiations and in all aspects of public life, as they make up half of the population. However, in his view, there is no guarantee that a peace talk will be more effective because of the specific ratio of women included.





# DIPLOMACY AND WAR

## Panellists

**H.E. Mansour Al-Otaibi**, Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations

**Staffan de Mistura**, former United Nations Special Envoy for Syria • PSIA Faculty Member, Sciences Po

**Jean-Baptiste Jeangène Vilmer**, Director of the Institute for Strategic Research (IRSEM), French Ministry of Defence • PSIA Faculty Member, Sciences Po

**Peter Herrly**, Colonel, U.S. Army (Retired) • former Chief of Doctrine, U.S. Joint Staff • former U.S. Defense Attaché, France • PSIA Faculty Member, Sciences Po

## Chair

**Vanessa Scherrer**, Vice President for International Affairs, Sciences Po

## The power of multilateral diplomacy

In a world faced with complex challenges that transcend borders, we should believe in diplomacy. This was the pledge with which H.E. Mansour Al-Otaibi kicked off the panel on diplomacy and war. During his introductory remarks, Ambassador Al-Otaibi stressed the need for diplomacy throughout the whole conflict cycle. While attention is often focused on diplomatic efforts which occur during conflict, Ambassador Al-Otaibi also argued that diplomacy has a crucial role in peacetime too, both before an eruption of conflict and once they have ended.

As Mr. Staffan de Mistura noted, however, diplomacy – and especially multilateral diplomacy – is particularly challenged at present. As proof of this trend, the former UN Special Envoy pointed at recent developments in Libya and Syria. He explained that in both situations, multilateral diplomacy efforts were hindered by the separate initiatives of individual states to pursue unilateral military operations or bilateral diplomatic efforts. In stark contrast, however, current cross-border challenges, such as climate change and COVID-19, reinforce the immense need for multilateral diplomacy in today's world.

While both speakers presented the United Nations as the world's key forum for multilateral diplomacy at the global level, they also acknowledged that there is some room for improvement within the UN. For instance, Mr. Al-Otaibi advocated for a stronger focus on conflict prevention, while Mr. de Mistura highlighted the need to address the UN Security Council's paralysis. Nevertheless – both speakers made clear – multilateral diplomacy is key, and the UN is and should remain its cornerstone.





## War and diplomacy: ensuring a multidisciplinary approach

Dr. Jean-Baptiste Jeangène Vilmer and Colonel Peter Herrly (retired), from their vantage point and experience in the military sector, presented the relationship between diplomacy and the use of force. Both speakers agreed that, despite typical assumptions, war and diplomacy are not antagonistic. In every conflict, key objectives of each party are of a political nature. In this context, both war and diplomacy can be employed to achieve such objectives. Effective diplomats should understand war, and those who serve in the military should grasp and implement diplomacy.

The two speakers also observed major changes in patterns of violence over the last few decades. Dr. Jeangène Vilmer pointed at what he called the “despecification of war”, that is, an increasingly blurred definition of peace and war. Several changes in the nature of war have contributed to this trend, notably an increased involvement of non-state actors (e.g. civilians, private companies) and use of new technologies (e.g. cyber and information technology). As a result, it is more challenging than ever before to clearly define where peace ends and war begins, as proved for instance by the concept of hybrid warfare.

Dr Jeangène Vilmer and Colonel Herrly also looked at future trends in use of force. Notably, Mr. Herrly stressed the importance of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence and new means of communication, as well as an increasing role of non-state actors. Focusing on this latter issue, Dr. Jeangène Vilmer explained how power is currently shifting away from the state to a wide array of new actors (e.g. individuals, companies, armed groups), and called for both diplomacy and war to adapt to this “post-Westphalian order”.

## Looking ahead: diplomacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

During the Q&A session, all speakers were asked to provide a single piece of advice for diplomats to adapt to new challenges which will characterize the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Answers from the four panelists touched upon a range of different issues. Stressing the UN’s global importance, Ambassador Al-Otaibi reiterated his call for increased efforts in preventive diplomacy.

Focusing instead on new technologies, Colonel Herrly encouraged diplomats to harness the power of artificial intelligence and to fight the spread of fake news.

Finally, Mr. de Mistura and Dr. Jeangène Vilmer called on 21<sup>st</sup> century diplomats to have a more hybrid, transversal, multi-disciplinary perspective. In an increasingly complex world, a broad and multi-faceted approach will be increasingly necessary to understand and address the challenges that lie ahead of us.





# INVESTIGATING NARRATIVES OF ANTHROPOLOGY & WAR

## Panellists

**R. Brian Ferguson**, Professor, Division of Global Affairs, Sociology and Anthropology, Rutgers University

**Hazem Kandil**, Reader in Political Sociology, Fellow of St Catharine's College, University of Cambridge

**Bette Dam**, Journalist • Author of "A Man and a Motorcycle, How Hamid Karzai Came to Power" • PSIA Faculty Member, Sciences Po

## Chair

**Deborah Wheeler**, Associate Professor, United States Naval Academy • Kuwait Program Visiting Professor, Sciences Po

## Anthropological forces behind war

Human behaviour and human interaction often explain escalation of conflict and war's beginnings, making the study of such factors essential for preventing future conflict. Dr. R. Brian Ferguson investigated factors that might incite conflict or war, including the notion that human beings have an innate evolutionary tendency to kill outsiders. He disagreed with the idea that men are evolutionary programmed to divide into groups of us and them to kill outsiders, using archaeological evidence that contradicts this idea regardless whether it is based in tribalism or archaeology. Moreover, he found that killing across groups is rare and closely related to local human disturbances through his research of events involving deadly violence, implying that wars are more about politics and power rather than ethnicity and sectarianism.

Based on his research findings applied to the US wars of the 2000s, he developed ten points on war:

- 1/ Our species is not biologically destined for war
- 2/ War is not an inescapable part of social existence
- 3/ Understanding war involves a nested hierarchy of constraints
- 4/ War expresses both pan-human practicalities and culturally specific values
- 5/ War shapes societies to its own ends
- 6/ War exists in multiple contexts
- 7/ Opponents are constructed in conflict
- 8/ War is a continuation of domestic politics by other means
- 9/ Leaders favor war because war favors leaders
- 10/ Peace is more than the absence of war

Source: Ferguson, B. R. (2008). Ten points on war. *Social Analysis*, 52(2), 32-49







## Social structure contributing to resistance of occupation

The structure of a society or community can have strong implications for how a population may react to an act of aggression or occupation. Dr. Hazem Kandil discussed how communities can react differently to military occupation or conflict. He contrasted the cases of the Kuwaiti resistance against the Iraqi invasion in 1990 and the Iraqi resistance to the United States invasion of Iraq that began in 2003. His research highlights an immediate and organised Kuwaiti response, where civil society was able to assume responsibilities normally managed by the government. These responsibilities ranged from management of food banks to circulation of information, in addition to coordinating strikes and acts of civil disobedience.

In terms of Iraqi response to the US invasion in 2003, this response was characterized as slow and disorganised. Dr Kandil argued the response developed due to mishandling of affairs by American forces, eventually becoming violent and controlled by ex-regime officials among other figures. While he attributed the difference in reactions regarding the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 to several characteristics such as population size and nature of occupation, he used these two contrasting accounts to emphasise the role of civil society in the type of resistance that forms. Dr Kandil explained that while the Kuwaiti system had a strong ruling family, whom were embedded within the Kuwaiti society itself, thus allowing civil society to coexist with the state. The Iraqi case, however, involved a totalitarian state that intervened in every aspect of life, hollowing out any presence of a civil society in the process. He concluded that the presence of a functioning civil society allowed resistance to form quickly and in an orderly manner in Kuwait, emphasising that this is a causal mechanism of how communities react to occupation.

## The role of narratives in media

Media plays a crucial role in reporting conflict, and thus has great influence on how narratives form. Mrs Bette Dam recounted her experience as a journalist reporting in Afghanistan, highlighting how moving away from Western culture helped her gain a greater understanding in regards to the media's vital role in shaping a narrative. According to her research, she found a lack of information presented in certain U.S.-based mainstream news outlets. These media outlets would rely solely on the same sources, such as U.S. coalition forces and Afghan government officials, rather than identifying and interviewing other perspectives. Not only did this bias apply to the Afghan War, Mrs Dam also discussed how when the Taliban surrendered, this story was largely absent from mainstream U.S. media. In conflict and crisis situations, the role of narratives remains highly important in providing an impartial version of events, especially in regards to how this may influence the writing of history.



# CLIMATE CHANGE AND CONFLICT

## Panellists

**François Gemenne**, CNRS Senior Research Associate • Director, The Hugo Observatory, University of Liege, Belgium • Co-Director, Observatory on Climate and Defense, DGRIS, Ministry of Armed Forces, France

**Carola Kloeck**, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Center for International Studies (CERI), Sciences Po

**Enrico Letta**, Dean of Sciences Po's Paris School of International Affairs (PSIA) • former Prime Minister of Italy

## Chair

**Nayef Al-Shammari**, Associate Professor in Economics Department, College of Business Administration, Kuwait University • Visiting Professor, Sciences Po

## Cross-cutting impacts of climate change

At no point in recent history have the challenges of an interconnected world been more visible. While the recent COVID-19 pandemic and climate change have elicited responses that have differed dramatically in speed, they both have in common a deep impact on our daily lives. They also demonstrate the importance of a coordinated global response. Many would prefer to put up barriers, revert to nationalistic tendencies, and protect “their own” from the worst possible consequences, but these are not sustainable solutions. Radical change across all policy fields and sections of society is necessary to address this existential threat without creating new conflicts or exacerbating current ones.

The multidisciplinary that had already come to define the day's proceedings remained at the core of the conference's last panel discussion. Each panellist was able to bring their unique perspective and expertise regarding the different conflicts that arise from climate change. Dr. François Gemenne started by discussing the military implications of climate change, as global warming has created a number of tensions around resources and the ability of states to fulfil basic needs. People in rural areas of West Africa are no longer able to survive from subsistence agriculture, leading to the emergence of terrorist groups like Boko Haram that prey on the vulnerable and growing numbers of “ecological migrants” trying to reach Europe. According to Dr. Gemenne, governments are more likely to treat these as defence and security issues by increasing military spending than as reasons to act on climate.







## Political and societal cleavages

After discussing forms of physical conflict that may arise from the consequences of climate change, the panel moved on to the build up of political fractures. Dr. Carola Kloeck focussed on political conflicts, presenting her work on small island states from which she draws lessons for other contexts. She presented the case of Narikoso, a village in Fiji where rising sea levels have caused the village to flood at high tide and attempts at mitigation have met with mixed results. This example illustrates the kind of difficult political decisions that will have to be taken all over the world to deal with the physical consequences of climate change.

The issue of political conflict was also raised by Dean Enrico Letta, who outlined some of the cleavages that exist among members of the European Union. He began with a note of optimism, claiming that never had an issue climbed to the top of the policy agenda as fast as climate change had in the past 18 months. He expressed concern however that the intensity of the policy shift is likely to lead to conflict both inside and outside the EU, in particular if there is no change of leadership in the US.

Following a question from the audience regarding the potential for steep increases in energy costs, Dr. Gemenne drew attention to the social conflicts that are likely to arise as a result of the “energy transition”. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) claim that the fight against climate change will create twenty-four million jobs by the end of 2021, but in Dr Gemenne’s view, the 6 million existing jobs that are expected to be lost will bear a greater weight in the minds of citizens.

Dr. Kloeck was eager to point to the even higher costs of inaction, but agreed that the benefits directly derived from “things not happening” were harder to get across. Our response should be to communicate more effectively on the human and economic impact of the more intense and more frequent floods, heat waves and storms. The pursuit of short-term profits in a capitalist economy was also identified as an additional challenge that needed to be overcome.

## Overcoming divides

Dr. Al-Shammari presented a key fundamental dilemma: climate change creates tensions, but the fight against it requires coordination. How do we resolve this seemingly intractable problem?

For Dr. Gemenne, nationalism is a bigger threat to the fight against climate change than oil and gas companies. This represents a golden opportunity for the European project - and other international organisations - to reinvent themselves into truly cosmopolitical entities.

As Dr. Kloeck reminded the audience that the most vulnerable countries are often the world’s smallest polluters, who remain highly dependent on multilateral action. The UN’s COP climate change conferences are the only fora in which all countries hold the same diplomatic standing. A question from the audience regarding the role international law could play in forcing governments to take more action was met with scepticism by Dr. Gemenne, but Dr. Kloeck argued that as much of it is transposed into national law, it has a growing role to play as a tool for legal recourse.

Conflicts arising from physical consequences of climate change are inevitable if we do not all pull in the same direction. However difficult this is to achieve within the context of the world’s current socio-economic system, Dean Letta was able to leave the audience with a note of optimism: “Political forces across the board have understood that going green is good for them, as well as for the planet”.





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